

# Teaching Ethics

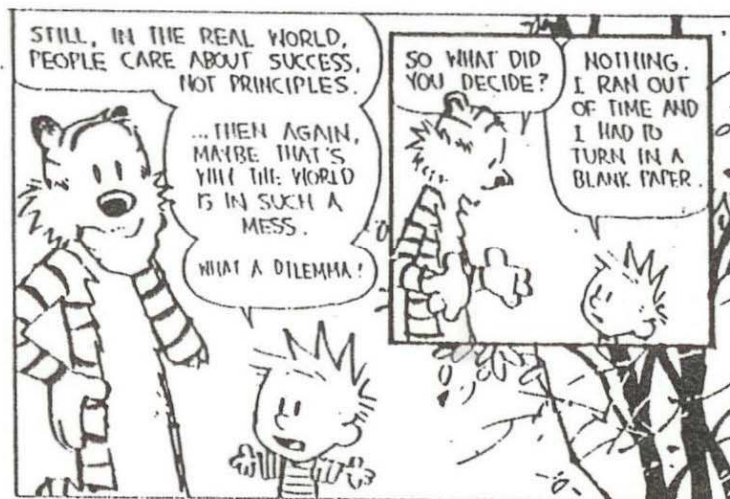


# Calvin and Hobbes



THEN I THOUGHT, LOOK, CHEATING ON ONE LITTLE TEST ISN'T SUCH A BIG DEAL. IT DOESN'T HURT ANYONE.

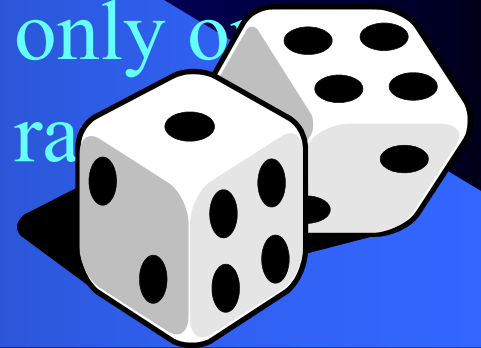
...BUT THEN I WONDERED IF I WAS JUST RATIONALIZING MY UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCE OF NOT STUDYING.



The same moral issues that men and women have grappled with throughout history have grown even more difficult in a society whose structures and forms are changing. And the impressive advances of science and technology have created a host of new issues. Yet precisely at this time, when we most need a firm intellectual foundation to guide our judgment, we are confused by countless challenges to our old and familiar standards.

-Vincent Ruggiero

In discussing ethics, rarely is there only one answer, rarely is it comfortable, and rarely is it enough.



# Ethics is the study of right and wrong conduct

Our laws are our country's conclusions about right and wrong. The focus of ethics is **moral situations**—that is, those situations in which there is a choice of behavior involving human values.

There is abundant cultural diversity within our society, and different *societal and religious* beliefs. We need ethics to help us reach a sound decision and to seek common ground. There are no moral guidelines for deciding whether one viewpoint is morally better than another. We are required to teach students to **ALLOW** for different views and cultural differences, without having to **adopt** all views.

# Moral Dilemma:

- Any situation of predicament that arises from the impossibility of honoring all the moral values that deserve honoring. This arises when the conflicting obligations, ideals, and consequences are so very nearly equal in their importance that we feel we can't choose among them, even though we must.





# Three Criteria for Judging

- What are our **obligations**? These include our friendships, citizenship rights and rules, business obligations, professional oaths or behavior. Obligations bind us morally to honor these. Obligations may also restrict our promises or behavior.
- What are our **ideals**? These include our goals, and our concepts of excellence, fairness, loyalty, forgiveness, peace.
- What may be the **consequences**? These may be either beneficial or harmful effects that result from the action and the people involved. These can be physical, emotional, obvious or hidden.

# Divorce Trial: Who Will Get the Embryos?

- ∩ Seven fertilized eggs from an in-vitro procedure
- ∩ Husband wants a divorce and wants nothing to do with the wife
- ∩ She has had 5 tubal pregnancies, one resulted in a ruptured fallopian tube
- ∩ Procedure included years of surgery, tests & injections, plus cost thousands of dollars
- ∩ Wife's only chance to have a child
- ∩ Husband does not want a child with her
- ∩ When does life begin?



The goal of our students  
(when asked a tough moral  
question) is to avoid  
thinking about the case at  
all, and merely bring forth  
a pre-fabricated, all-  
purpose answer; one that is  
easy and requires no  
emotional stand.

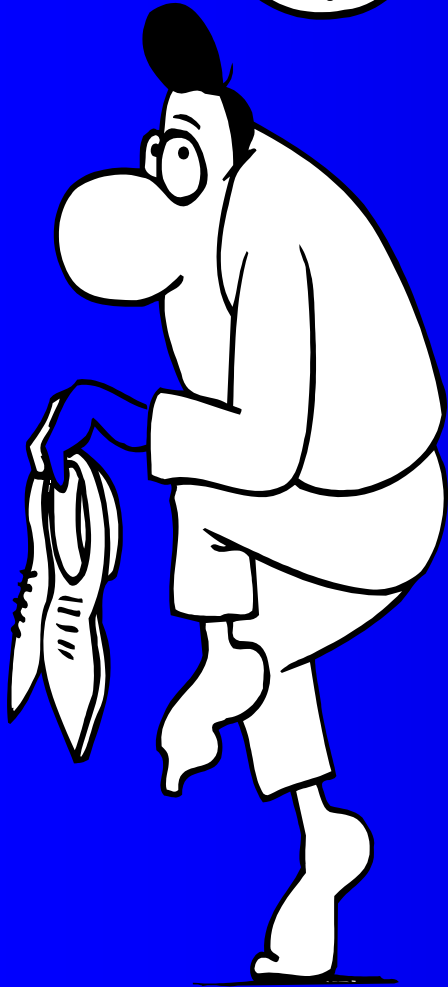
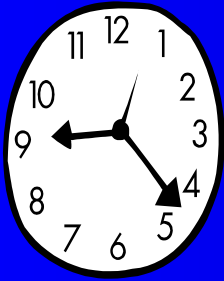




# Socrates said,

“Every man should expend his chief thought and attention on his first principles. Are they, or are they not rightly laid down? And when he has duly sifted through them, all the rest will follow.”





Our values tell us what is right and wrong, good and evil, and imply a preference in regard to correct human behavior. Our values go beyond telling us what IS, to what OUGHT to be. With the explosion of knowledge and scientific advancement, there is a huge need to have a foundation of “rightly laid down principles.”

# DOES TEACHING ETHICS MATTER?

- A national report by Who's Who Among American High School Students showed 4 of 5 top students admitted cheating at some point.
- Nine out of ten high school teachers acknowledge that cheating is a problem in their school
- In a report titled, "Report Card on the Ethics of American Youth," lying and cheating seem to be a way of life for many of the 8,600 students surveyed. Included:
  - 92% have lied to parents at least once
  - 78% have lied to a teacher at least once
  - 27% would lie to get a job
  - 71% cheated on an exam at least once
  - 45% cheated more than once
  - 70% have stolen something from a store
  - 75% of college students admitted cheating in college

If I can't trust you,  
what good are you?

NY Times suspends  
Pulitzer Prize Winning  
Author

Anderson Charged for  
Shredding Enron Documents

High School Principal  
puts Pressure on Teachers  
to Change Football Player's  
Grades

Tribune Reporters Fired for Dealings  
With Tabloid Paper

Internet gives college cheaters a high-tech edge



We CAN get away with this, but SHOULD we?





# How To Destroy a Village What the Clinton's Taught a 17- Year-Old Boy

- Past experiences always shapes or biases our current perception of things
- We see the world not as it is, but as WE are
- Examples of current student attitudes:

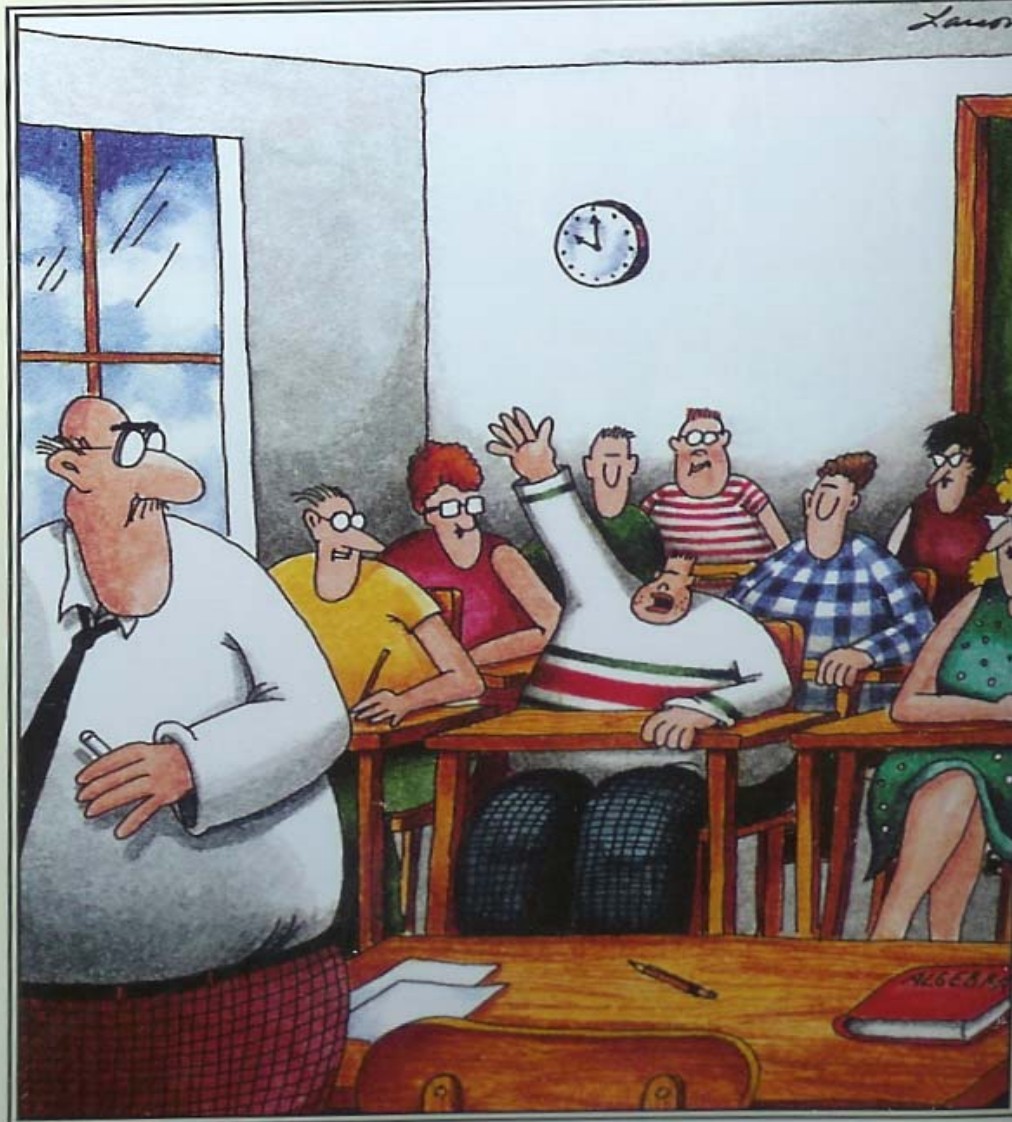
1. Be aware of your first impressions.
2. Consider other views and the arguments used to support them.
3. Keep your thinking flexible.
4. Express your judgment precisely and explain the reasoning underlying it.
5. Live with your decision, don't second guess yourself.

DO kids even pay  
attention?



9/8/86

Lawson



"Mr. Osborne, may I be excused? My brain is full."

"Whatever you do in life, do with integrity. You are preparing for the tests of life. If you cheat, if you don't play fair or follow the rules, if you win by hurting another, then you have failed the test. You have won a "false" victory, a coward's victory. It is hollow, and the rewards... cheap."

# HOW to Teach Ethics

- Use what is current – make it relevant (news, magazines, TV shows, etc)
- Discuss examples of moral dilemmas
- Be an example in ALL you do
- Have students research different business ethics guidelines (Hippocratic Oath, etc.)
- Make it a safe environment to express & discuss differing opinions
- Show that life is not “black and white”
- Discuss confidentiality and other business ethics, role play situations
- Assign a novel to read together and discuss in class (see list)



Examples of lessons that work!